

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Kokomo Wellfield Ground Water Contamination Site

Federal Programs Section – Site Investigations Program

(317) 234-3505 • (800) 451-6027

www.idem.IN.gov

100 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204

Background:

- Vinyl Chloride and arsenic have been detected in several of the City of Kokomo's municipal water wells. These wells provide drinking water to nearly 50,000 residents living in Kokomo.
- There have been detections that have exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA's) maximum contaminant level (MCL) for drinking water in the untreated water; however, because the city has previously installed a filtering system that removes these contaminants from water, the water being sent to residents for consumption is free of these contaminants.
- Working under a cooperative agreement with U.S. EPA, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has determined a need to investigate the ground water contamination so that appropriate actions can be taken.

2013 Kokomo Wellfield Ground Water Contamination Investigation:

- Beginning in the summer of 2013, IDEM's Site Investigations Program will be in Kokomo to obtain ground water samples and/or soil samples from areas near Kokomo's drinking water wells and at potential source
- IDEM staff will also be obtaining ground water samples from existing monitoring wells, and possibly from private businesses and/or residences.
- The information derived from the samples will be used to determine the levels of, and possibly the source of, the ground water contamination.
- Representatives from IDEM may request access to your property to take ground water samples or drinking water samples from your business or residence to accomplish this task. There is no charge associated with these samples, and you will be provided with sample results from the analysis of samples collected on your property.
- Participation in this sampling event is voluntary but encouraged, to assist IDEM in finding the extent of the ground water contamination.

Environmental Impacts:

- Vinyl chloride is a manufactured chemical that is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC). PVC is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and packaging materials. Vinyl chloride is also a breakdown product of other chemicals, such as tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene. The effects of drinking high levels of vinyl chloride are unknown.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has determined that vinyl chloride is a known carcinogen. It has not been proven that vinyl chloride causes birth defects in humans, but studies in animals suggest that vinyl chloride might affect growth and development. Animal studies also suggest that infants and young children might be more susceptible than adults to vinyl chloride-induced cancer.
- People can be exposed to vinyl chloride from ingesting contaminated water used for drinking, cooking and bathing (showering). A contaminated water supply also can impact indoor air quality in the home as vinyl chloride gasses can be released from water during bathing, cooking and laundry activities.

IDEM's Role:

- IDEM is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- By conducting this investigation, IDEM will be better able to determine what actions are needed to assure that the residents of Kokomo continue to have water that is safe to drink.

The project is being managed by the Site Investigations Program in the IDEM Federal Programs Section. The sampling event this summer will include staff from IDEM's Site Investigations Program, as well as the Science Services Section and the Geology Section in IDEM's Remediation Services Branch.

Citizens' Role:

- Kokomo residents and businesses can assist the State of Indiana by allowing IDEM to take ground water samples from their residence or place of business.
- Access to your well will allow IDEM to sample the ground water at various locations in the Kokomo area and to better identify the extent of contamination, direction of the ground water plume, and a possible source. Left unaddressed the contamination will move with the flow of the ground water and may become more widespread.

Additional Information:

- For questions and concerns about IDEM's environmental investigation in the Kokomo area, contact Amanda Owen, IDEM Project Manager, at (317) 234-3505; toll free at (800) 451-6027 ext. 4-3505, or by email at aowen@idem.in.gov.
- For health-related questions, contact:
 - The Federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at (800) 621-8431.
 - The Howard County Health Department at (765) 456-2403.
- For media inquires, contact Barry Sneed, IDEM Public Information Officer at (317) 232-8596, toll free at (800) 451-6027 ext. 2-8596, or by email at bsneed@idem.in.gov.
- For more information about IDEM's Site Investigations Program, please visit IDEM's website at www.idem.IN.gov/4143.htm.